

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated January 12, 2005. Claims 1 to 5 and 7 to 9 are pending in the application, of which Claims 1 and 7 to 9 are independent.

The drawings were objected to because they included reference characters 209 and 210 that were not mentioned in the description. The amendments to the specification herein, inserting reference numeral 209 after "color correction/color conversion module" and reference numeral 210 after "quantization/gradation correction module" are believed to satisfy the Examiner's objections, thereby eliminating the need for drawing corrections. It is therefore respectfully requested that the objection to the drawings be withdrawn.

Claim 5 was objected to because of an informality. As suggested by the Examiner, "file" has been changed herein to -- files --. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the objection to Claim 5 be withdrawn.

Claims 4 and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claim 4 has been amended to indicate that the number of databases created by the calibration is controlled on the basis of said management file. Claim 6 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that these objections be withdrawn.

Claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as being directed to non-statutory subject matter. Claim 8 has been amended in accordance with the Examiner's suggestion. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this objection be withdrawn.

Claims 1 to 5 and 7 to 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,333,790 (Kageyama) and U.S. Patent No. 6,151,135 (Tanaka).

The present invention is concerned with achieving high-quality image processing. In accordance with the invention, this may be accomplished by forming a gradation correction table sufficiently in consideration of the recording medium to which image output is executed and individual differences in image forming heads.

Turning to specific claim language, amended independent Claim 1 is directed to an image processing method which includes a holding step for holding an original database in which a correction condition corresponding to a reproducing property of an output unit is stored, a forming step for, as calibration processing, acquiring from the original database a gradation correction table corresponding to a recording medium to which image output is executed and head rank information of the output unit to create a new database, and a correction processing step for effecting correction processing regarding input data by using the created new database. Accordingly, the calibration processing not only creates the new database but also forms a management file based on head identification information of a head used in the output unit.

In contrast, Kageyama discloses a printer controller which manages a printer using an individual printer information database. The individual printer database can be used to keep track of use of consumables in the printer including toner. However, the individual printer database cannot be used in calibration processing for a gradation correction table corresponding to a recording medium to which image output is executed and head rank information.

Furthermore, Tanaka discloses that the color conversion table of a printer is corrected using operator inputs. However, nothing in Tanaka suggests calibration processing using a gradation correction table corresponding to a recording medium.

Therefore, neither Kageyama nor Tanaka, neither alone nor in combination, disclose or suggest at least the feature of, as calibration processing, a gradation correction table corresponding to a recording medium to which image output is executed and head rank information of the output unit is acquired from an original database, and a new database is created. Accordingly, Applicant submits that Claim 1 is in condition for allowance and respectfully request same.

Claims 7, 8 and 9 are directed to an apparatus, a storage medium which stores therein a program for executing an image processing method and a method, respectively, in accordance with the features of Claim 1. Applicant submits that the discussion from above in regard to Claim 1 applies equally to Claims 7, 8 and 9. Accordingly, Applicant submits that Claims 7, 8 and 9 are also in condition for allowance and respectfully requests same.

The other pending claims in this application are each dependent from the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed allowable for at least the same reasons. Because each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, individual consideration of each dependent claim on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, CA office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Frank L. Cire', is written over a horizontal line.

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